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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Forty-sixth session
(Provisional Agenda item 4(b))

CLIMATE CHANGE

(Commission decision E (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision E (45).

2. In accordance with paragraph 1 of this decision, the Commission is informed that the secretariat has participated in and contributed to the following meetings of direct relevance to the question of climate change:

- Regional Follow-up Conference to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development in the ECE Region (Bergen, Norway, 8-16 May 1990);

- International Conference on Energy in Climate Development (Saarbrücken, Germany, 28-31 May 1990) organized by the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development;

- Fourth (concluding) session of the Joint WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Sundsvall, Sweden, 27-31 August 1990); and

- Second World Climate Conference (Geneva, 29 October - 3 November 1990).

GE.91-20536 /6496a

3. With respect to paragraph 2 of decision E (45) the secretariat will also be represented at the fifth session of the IPCC, to take place on 13-15 March 1991. This session will focus on the future work programme of the IPCC in the light of the resolutions of WMO and UNEP and the results of the first session of the UN Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (4-14 February 1991). Substantive issues relating to climate change have been taken up by

- the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Energy who approved a study on Interrelationships between Environmental and Energy Policies; the study concluded inter alia that "growingly and further into the twenty-first century [energy] scenarios of the type presented [in the present study] are not considered "sustainable", both on account of the risk of climate variation resulting from the heavy fossil fuel bias of the projected energy path, and also on account of the considerable drain on ECE and world conventional oil, uranium and gas reserves" (ENERGY/AC.10/R.2/Rev.1, para.8);

- the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Energy who adopted the project Energy Efficiency 2000, which aims at significantly reducing the energy efficiency gap between member States (ECE/ENERGY/15, para.17; para.14(a) of the Bergen Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development in the ECE Region);

- the Committee on Electric Power which continued its studies of the Practicability of reducing greenhouse emissions: limit studies, and Interconnection between greenhouse gas emission and other emission control policies (EP/GE.4/36, paras.29-32);

- the Committee on Gas which began its study on Interrelationship between gas and climate change by adopting a questionnaire and considering a first contribution on Mitigating the greenhouse effect through the use of natural gas and energy efficient technology (GAS/GE.3/36, paras.22 and 23);

- the Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments who reviewed a secretariat study on Sustainable development - framework for discussion of selected issues (EC.AD/R.48) at their twenty-sixth session (28 May - 1 June 1990);

- the Coal Committee which undertook an inquiry into Coal industry or government sponsored studies of direct relevance to the coal combustion-CO_2 issue (COAL/R.161/Add.1).

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Forty-sixth session
(Provisional Agenda item 4(c))

STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

(Commission decision F (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. Since the forty-fifth session of the Commission, the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and the Statistical Division of the ECE secretariat have taken follow-up action in order to implement decision F (45), as set out below.

2. At its session in June 1990 the Conference revised its work programme in accordance with the principles laid down in the above-mentioned decision. The programme adopted fully corresponds to the requests of the Commission, i.e. emphasizing, in particular, activities designed to assist countries in transition, their integration into the global economy and development projects (Report ECE/CES/36).

3. Requirements for data as well as for related statistical assistance from emerging new sub-regional forms of international co-operation have been taken into account by the Conference to the extent possible. In addition, it should be mentioned that important activities in this field were also carried out by EFTA, Eurostat and the OECD. In order to improve the level of co-operation and co-ordination, an informal consultation was held between members of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and the secretariats of ECE, Eurostat and OECD in January 1991.

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4. Measures were taken in the field of energy statistics to encourage a co-ordinated methodological approach and to facilitate the exchange of data between international organizations in the ECE region. Similar activities are carried out in the field of environment statistics, statistics of services and transport statistics.

5. In response to operative paragraph 4 of decision F (45) the submission of data has been considerably improved in terms of both quality and quantity. Furthermore a number of countries have increased their contributions to the implementation of the work programme. Lastly, meeting activities have found a greater response, particularly in priority areas.

6. The methodological assistance requested in operative paragraph 5 of the decision has so far focused on statistical offices in transition.

7. Revision or reaffirmation of priorities and streamlining of the Conference's programme of work started with the adoption of the new work programme at the 1990 plenary session. The work will be continued at a Seminar in March 1991 for heads of statistical offices and will come to a tentative conclusion in June 1991.

8. The joint meeting of the Committee on the Development of Trade and the Conference of European Statisticians on foreign trade disparities took place from 12 to 13 November 1990. (For the report see CES/AC.45/8 : TRADE/AC.25/2).

9. The Executive Secretary reported to the thirty-eighth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians on resources, as requested by decision F (45).

10. In accordance with the provisions of decision O (45), he has undertaken a reallocation of secretariat resources to strengthen the Commission's work on statistics.